

NATIONAL CUSTOMERS SERVICE AWARDS

The National Customer Awards program was the result of a cooperative agreement between DOL/ETA and National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA -- formerly ICESA). This program was developed in 1994 to provide an incentive to the State Employment Security Agencies (SESA) for the development of innovative projects that represent the highest quality of service delivery. These Awards are meant to recognize projects, services, and programs that are the best of what the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) are challenging States to achieve. With the implementation of the WIA, we are expecting to see projects that will showcase models for the new Workforce Environment.

The goals and accomplishments of this program are:

- / To recognize successful, innovative State and local achievement and the staff who provides high-quality services to customers;
- / To identify State and local initiatives on which to model and develop national programs; and
- / To publicize outstanding State and local projects and activities that effectively respond to critical workforce security and development issues

There are four categories in which the projects can be submitted:

- / **The Architect of Change Award** - -recognizes innovative projects that present new ideas, new methods of service delivery, techniques for reaching a new market or a new product altogether;
- / **The Pyramid Prize** - - focuses on the collaboration between agencies to improve services to customers by successfully integrating programs, funds, customers and other resources;
- / **The Compass Award** - - showcases the most innovative use of cutting-edge tools and/or technology to improve customer access and to increase satisfaction with the services delivery;
- / **Building a World Class Workforce -- Professional Development and Capacity Building** - - This is a people award for projects that effectively build workforce capacity. The winners must demonstrate service quality and customer satisfaction.

This years awards presents an excellent opportunity to learn more about dozens of solutions that workforce development colleagues are implementing on behalf of customers. Nominators from almost 50 percent of State Workforce Agencies deserve special thanks for sharing at least one of their accomplishments so that others may learn from it. The 2001 winners will be recognized for their outstanding achievements at NASWA's Winter Policy Forum in Washington, D.C., February 27 - March 1, 2002. To obtain further information on the location and time for the Winter Policy Forum, please visit the Internet website www.WorkforceATM.org under the link for Conference/Forums.

The Employment and Training Administration's Office of Workforce Security also has available, at no cost, a National Customer Service Award catalogue that provides a wealth of information on the Winners, Finalist, and Nominations for 2000 and 2001. To receive a catalogue, please contact Gay Gilbert at (202)693-3428 or Dorrie Russell at (202)693-2781. Or you can mail your request to:

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Employment and Training Administration
Office of Workforce Security
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The 2001 National Customer Service Award Winners are:

THE PYRAMID PRIZE

State of Wisconsin: *“Racine County Workforce Development Center”*

This project reinvented employment services by integrating staff and resources to create a seamless and single employment and training system that provides customer focus and universal access. The staff services created to achieve this reinvention are: ***Employment Resource Area*** – which contains touch screen computers with job listings, resume templates, printers, fax, copiers, telephones, and other resources; ***Career Discovery Center*** – provides individuals career counseling, computerized career assessment and exploration tools, and self assessment through a specialized employer specific testing; ***Academic Improvement Area*** – provides basic skill instructions through a computerized self-paced instructional curriculum, tutoring in apprenticeship testing, SAT, ACT test preparation, and many technical courses; ***Workforce Development Instructions*** – a variety of job search workshops are conducted daily. In addition a local technical college offers “credit” course in a topic related to upgrading the skills of the workforce.

Honorable Mention- State of Washington: *“Columbia Gorge Alternative High School”*

To combat high school dropout rates in their local community, WorkSource Columbia Gorge, one of Washington's One-Stop systems, implemented a successful alternative high school model and

integrated it into its employment and training strategy. Educational programs are supplemented with a full array of career development opportunities offered through the One-Stop system. Located in three WorkSource centers, programs are designed to provide at-risk students the opportunity to continue their education in a non-traditional school setting while meeting graduation requirements. In addition to academics, students are introduced to employment and career possibilities. As students complete credits and work toward diplomas or GED certificates, applications to the real world become evident.

THE COMPASS AWARD

State of Oregon: *“Electronic Payroll Reporting Option Suite”*

This challenge for any tax unit is to balance customer compliance with customer service. To meet the quarterly tax filing needs of their diverse employer base, Oregon implemented a suite of reporting options based on any given employer’s situation. In addition to traditional paper filing, employers can select from the following electronic filing options: particularly useful for larger employers in a PC environment, employers can file quarterly reports using a PC-based software program; targeting smaller employers or those with Macintosh systems, businesses can elect to file via a secure Internet site; for businesses that have no payroll to report for a particular quarter, an electronic telephone reporting system has been established.

BUILDING A WORLD CLASS WORKFORCE AWARD

State of Washinton: *“Building a Better Workforce Through Integrated Communications”*

Washington’s Employment Security Department realized that to reengineer both its business and culture and to become a true learning organization, it needed to better manage internal communications. Over a period of several years, the department pioneered and integrated communications approach to give users greater control over the information they had received and better ways to interact with others. By linking e-mail, a daily electronic newsletter, an agency Intranet and the wider world of Internet, the department has vastly improved its internal communications, empowering staff and making it much easier for the organization to change.

State of Wisconsin: *“Resource Room Career Development Training”*

All 79 Wisconsin Job Centers have two things in common: a resource area and the need to provide high quality career information to job seekers and customers. To meet these needs, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development’s Division of Workforce Solutions (DWD/DWS) identified competencies for paraprofessional-level career development and resources room providers. These competencies were used to develop and implement a training curriculum for staff. The training helped prepare staff working in Job Center and Resource Rooms to be better prepared to serve customers.

ARCHITECT OF CHANGE

Honorable Mention - State of New Mexico: “Bridge to Employment”

New Mexico’s Bridge to Employment was initiated by the Los Alamos National Laboratory to assist welfare recipients with work experience, job search, and short-term training needs. The program provides opportunity for welfare recipients in Northern New Mexico and facilitates their transition off welfare by helping them to develop knowledge, skills, and ability that will enable them to obtain and retain jobs. During a six month training program, participants received on-the-job training in basic entry-level positions, work readiness training, basic education, and occupation specific training. Participants also received re-employment assistance through job leads and job search guidance.

The National Customer Service Award winners for 2000 were:

ARCHITECT OF CHANGE AWARD

State of Washington: WorkFirst Post Employment Services

COMPASS AWARD

State of New York State: CareerZone (www.nycareerzone.org)

State of North Carolina: Trade Claims Intranet

BUILDING A WORLD CLASS WORKFORCE - - CAPACITY BUILDING

State of Indiana: Lifelong Learning Institute